PURPOSE OF THE PROGRAM

The Consumer Information Center (CIC) helps major Federal departments and agencies share with the public, information of general interest collected as a by-product of the government's research, program, and procurement activities; promotes public awareness of Federal consumer information through publication of the quarterly Consumer Information Catalog and through various media services; and coordinates distribution of Federal consumer publications from a central distribution facility in Pueblo, Colorado.

AUTHORITY FOR THE PROGRAM

Executive Order 11566, October 26, 1970. The fund was created by the 1983 Supplemental Appropriations Act (P.L. 98-63).

HISTORY OF THE PROGRAM

In his Consumer Message of October 1969, the President directed his special assistant for Consumer Affairs to develop a program for sharing with the public the information the Government acquires as a by-product of its research, development, and procurement activities. A committee composed of officials from 22 major Federal departments and agencies was organized to investigate various means by which Government information sharing could be accomplished. The Committee recommended to the President that he create within an existing agency a small operational unit to coordinate the efforts of the Federal agencies with expertise in specific subject areas.

As a result of that recommendation, the President issued Executive Order 11566 dated October 26, 1970, which established within GSA the Consumer Product Information Coordinating Center under the policy guidance of the Special Assistant for Consumer Affairs. In April 1972, the Center's name in effect was changed to the Consumer Information Center at the direction of the House Appropriations Subcommittee and its mission clarified to "promote the development production, and public dissemination of government documents containing product information of possible use to consumers." The center has subsequently included the dissemination of consumer information of a general nature in its missions.

During 1972 the Consumer Information Center was financed through an allocation from the Office of Consumer Affairs. Beginning with 1973 a separate appropriation was provided for this item.

In 1973 the consumer publication distribution function and $90,000 was transferred to the Government Printing Office (GPO) distribution facility in Pueblo, Colorado. Prior to that time, this function was operated in a similar manner by the Federal Supply Service on a reimbursable basis. In December 1973, the Center released the first edition of a listing of consumer publications in Spanish.

In 1974, the Center's media program was expanded to include the distribution of scripts to radio and television stations. In 1975, it began contracting for production of radio and television announcements to promote the Center's activities. The commercials are aired free as a public service.

In 1977 Congress determined that funds for the distribution of free consumer publications should be appropriated to the Center and transferred the appropriation out of the GPO budget effective in FY 1978.

In 1978, the Office of Management and Budget decided that beginning in FY 1979 a reimbursable program would be established, and each Federal agency would pay its share of the cost of distributing free publications through the Center to GPO. In 1988, 9.7 million publications were distributed.

With the spring 1983 issue of the Consumer Information Catalog, the CIC began charging a $1.00 user fee on Catalog orders for two or more free publications. This cost-recovery was implemented a the result of a study, conducted at the request of the Senate HUD-Independent Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee, which found that a user fee was a feasible and desirable method to partially recover the costs of providing this service.

Also in 1983, the Supplemental Appropriations Act (P.L. 98-63 of July 30, 1983) established the Consumer Information Center Fund, a revolving fund, to provide for a more businesslike operation of CIC activities. All CIC activities are now to be financed from monies deposited to the fund, consisting of annual appropriations, reimbursements from agencies, user fees collected from the public, and other incidental income. While annual appropriations continue to support essentially the same administrative functions as before, they are now treated as any other income, and deposited to the Fund. Appropriation language for the Fund also stipulates both an administrative expense limitation and a limitation on total spending.

In 1982, the CIC had been made organizationally part of the Office of Information Resources Management (OIRM). Effective November 17, 1985, however, it was reassigned to a new Office of Public Affairs by GSA Order ADM 5440.333 of November 1, 1985.

DESCRIPTION OF BUDGETARY ACTIVITIES

1. Administrative Expenses. This activity provides for CIC employee salaries and support, printing the Consumer Information Catalog, and the media advertising campaign. These costs are financed by direct appropriations and user fees from the public. Administrative expenses for a fiscal year may not exceed the limitation for that year contained in annual appropriations acts.

2. Publications Distribution. The CIC bills agencies and in turn reimburses the Government Printing Office for the costs of distributing free publications to the public.

3. Special Programs. Special projects supporting the CIC mission are financed by fees collected from the public and by other revenue and income in the fund.

DEVELOPMENT OF APPROPRIATION LANGUAGE

A 1971 supplemental request for start-up costs and staffing for the Consumer Information Center (then the Consumer Product Information Coordinating Center) under S&E, Office of Administrator was stricken in conference. Initial language appeared in the Agriculture-Environmental and Consumer Protection Appropriation Act, 1972; beginning in 1976, it was included in the HUD-Independent Agencies Appropriation Act. The language as of FY 1998 follows:

"For necessary expenses of the Consumer Information Center, including services as authorized by 5 U.S.C. 3109, $____________ to be deposited into the Consumer Information Center Fund: *Provided*, That the appropriations, revenues and collections deposited into the fund shall be available for necessary expenses of Consumer Information Center activities in the aggregate amount of $7,500,000. Appropriations, revenues, and collections accruing to this fund during fiscal year 1998 in excess of $7,500,000 shall remain in the fund and shall not be available for expenditure except as authorized in appropriations Acts: *Provided further*, That notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Consumer Information Center may except and deposit to this account, during fiscal year 1998 and hereafter, gifts for the purpose of defraying its costs of printing, publishing, and distributing consumer information and educational materials and undertaking other consumer information activities; may expend those gifts for those purposes, in addition to amounts appropriated or otherwise made available; and the balance shall remain available for expenditure for such purpose."

NOTE: The 1983 Supplemental Appropriations Act (P.L. 98-63) was enacted after, and modified, both the 1983 and 1984 regular appropriations Acts. The language of the Supplemental Act, creating the Fund, is reproduced below for record purposes:

"Notwithstanding any other provision of law, there is hereby established in the Treasury of the United States a Consumer Information Center Fund, General Services Administration, for the purpose of disseminating Federal Government consumer information to the public and for other related purposes. There shall be deposited into the fund for fiscal year 1983 and subsequent fiscal years: (A) Appropriations from the general funds of the Treasury for Consumer Information Center activities; (B) User fees from the public; (C) Reimbursements from other Federal agencies for costs of distributing publications; and (D) Any other income incident to Consumer Information Center activities. Moneys deposited into the fund shall be available for expenditure for Consumer Information Center activities in such amounts as are specified in appropriation Acts. Any unobligated balances at the end of the fiscal year shall remain in the fund and shall be available for authorization in appropriation Acts for subsequent fiscal years. This fund shall assume all the liabilities, obligations, and commitments of the said Consumer Information Center account. The revenues and collections deposited into the fund shall be available for necessary expenses of Consumer Information Center activities in the amount of $5,415,000 during fiscal year 1983. Administrative expenses of the Consumer Information Center in fiscal year 1983 shall not exceed $1,382,000. For the purposes of the fund, administrative expenses shall be defined as those expenses previously paid from appropriations to the Consumer Information Center. Revenues and collections accruing to this fund during fiscal year 1983 in excess of $6,797,000 shall remain in the fund and shall not be available for expenditure except as authorized in appropriation Acts. The Department of Housing and Urban Development-Independent Agencies Appropriation Act, 1984 (Public Law 98-45), is hereby amended by deleting "other than administrative expenses" from the first proviso under the heading "General Services Administration, Consumer Information Center"."

BUDGETARY HISTORY OF APPROPRIATIONS
$(Thousands)

Fiscal Year	Estimate to OMB	Presidents Allowance	House Bill	Senate Bill	Appropriation Amount	Appropriation P.L.	Appropriation Date
1971 Supp.	205	205	1/	205	-	91-665	1/8/71
1972	625	646	450	450	450	92-73	8/10/71
1973	893	893	823	823	823	92-399	8/22/72
1974	1,000	635	635	635	635	93-135	10/24/73
Suppl.	30	30	30	30	30	93-305	6/8/74
1975	1,017	886	996	886	996	93-563	12/31/74
1976	1,056	1,056	1,054	1,054	1,054	94-116	10/17/75
TQ	264	264	264	264	264	94-116	10/17/75
Suppl.	5	5	-	-	-	94-303	6/1/76
1977	1,073	1,073	1,073	1,073	1,073	94-378	8/9/76
Suppl.	20	20	19	19	19	95-26	5/4/77
1978	1,159	1,159	4,700	4,700	4,700	95-119	10/4/77
Suppl.	31	31	-	-	-	-	-
1979	1,208	1,146	1,146	1,146	1,146	95-392	9/30/78
Suppl.	26	26	16	16	16	96-38	7/25/79
1980	1,338	1,315	1,315	1,315	1,315	96-86	10/12/79
Suppl.	37	37	-	-	-	-	-
1981	1,409	1,432	1,409	1,381	1,381	96-526	12/15/80
Suppl.	44	-	-	-	-	-	-
1982	1,581	1,314	1,314	1,344	2/ 1,290	97-101	12/23/81
1983	1,299	1,299	1,299	1,351	1,351	97-272	9/30/82
1984	1,449	1,449 4/	3/ 1,349	3/ 1,349	3/ 1,349	98-45	7/12/83

1985	300	349	1,149	1,149	1,149	98-371	7/18/84
1986	1,249	1,249	1,249	1,235	1,235	99-160	11/25/85
Sequester 5/	--	--	--	--	- 53		
1987	1,272	1,272	1,272	1,272	1,272	99-591	10/30/86
Suppl. 6/	--	--	14	14	14	100-71	7/11/87
1988	1,339	1,339	1,339	1,339	1,279	100-202	12/22/87
1989	1,365	1,354	1,354	1,354	1,354	100-404	8/19/88
1990							
1991							
1992							
1993							
1994							
1995							
1996							
1997							
1998							

1/ Not considered by House.

2/ Appropriation reduced pursuant to P.L. 97-101.

3/ The budget request, except offset by $100,000 available under Fund from charges collected from the public.

4/ Proposed reduction and increase in user fees; not accepted by Congress.

5/ Cancellation of budget authority pursuant to the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, P.L. 99-177 (Gramm-Rudman-Hollings).

6/ Included $8 for increased pay costs and $6 for increased retirement contributions.

APPROPRIATIONS AVAILABLE, OBLIGATIONS, AND OUTLAYS
$(Thousands)

Fiscal Year	Approp- riations	Transfers	Total Available	Obligations	Unobligated Balance	Outlays
1972	450	(Financed by allocation from Office of Consumer Affairs)				
1973	823	-90	773	690	43	482
1974	665	-	665	644	21	725
1975	996	-	996	978	18	814
1976	1,054	-	1,054	906	148	1,030
TQ	264	1/ 148	412	364	48	224
1977	1,092	-	1,092	1,070	22	1,010
1978	4,700	-	4,700	4,555	145	4,264
1979	1,162	-	1,162	1,144	18	1,059
1980	1,315	2/ -3	1,312	1,303	9	1,484
1981	1,409	3/ -78	1,331	1,327	4	1,742
1982	1,290	-	1,290	1,280	10	-875
1983	1,351	4/ 65	1,416	1,396	5/ 20	208
1984	1,349	6/ -1	1,348	1,266	82	1,239

1985	1,149	--	1,149	986	163	1,190
1986	1,182	--	1,182	1,165	17	56
1987	1,286	--	1,286	1,270	16	1,209
1988	1,279	--	1,279	1,256	23	1,847
1989						
1990						
1991						
1992						
1993						
1994						
1995						
1996						
1997						

NOTE: After 1983, outlays are net for the whole CIC Fund, and do not necessarily relate to appropriations.

1/ 1976 unobligated balance is available during TQ.
2/ Furniture rescission P.L. 96-304
3/ Rescission P.L. 96-526 ($28). Transfer to O.E., NARS P.L. 97-12 ($50)
4/ Transfer from OE, ADTS (OIRM) for direct funding of user-specific ADP hardware and software support.
5/ Balance remains in new revolving fund for subsequent authorization. Outlays are for CIC Fund.
6/ To GMA for Employee Learning Centers/training.

Principal Financial Aspects of the Program
$(Thousands)

	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988
Source of funding:						
Unoblig. balance brought forward	--	617	920	848	793	934
Unoblig. bal. restored/rescinded	--	48	- 63	1/ --	--	--
Appropriations (adjusted)	1,416	1,348	1,149	1,182	1,286	1,279
Reimbursements from Agencies	2,784	1,813	2,193	2,195	2,573	2,319
User fees	104	282	292	382	341	352
Other income	--	--	155	133	55	115
Recovery of prior-yr obligs.	--	--	--	--	83	--
Total resources available	4,304	4,108	4,646	4,740	5,131	4,999
[Limitation on use of income] 2/	[6,797]	[7,949]	[4,449]	[5,200]	[5,200]	[5,140]
Application of Resources:						
Administrative expenses:						
Salaries and benefits	626	569	665	689	724	708
Printing of the Catalog	370	440	380	349	405	376
Advertising campaign	59	74	20	148	165	150
All other	341	283	289	328	351	390
Total administrative expenses	1,396	1,366	1,354	1,514	1,645	1,624
[Admin. Expense Limitation] 3/	[1,447]	[1,449]	[1,449]	[1,631]	[1,664]	[1,652]
Publications distribution	2,291	1,702	2,220	2,231	2,474	2,400
Special projects	--	120	71	66	78	105

Total Obligations 4/	3,687	3,188	3,645	3,811	4,197	4,129
Prior year adjustments	--	--	172	136	--	--
Unoblig. bal. carried forward	617	920	848	793	934	870
Total Resources Applied	4,304	4,108	4,646	4,740	5,131	4,999

Notes to table:

1/
Pursuant to sec. 2901 of the Deficit Reduction Act of 1984.
2/
Maximum income/resources that may be applied/obligated, stated in annual appropriation acts; income in excess of these amounts remains in the fund as unavailable until subsequently authorized in appropriations acts.
3/
Limitation on administrative expenses in annual acts. 1983 amount includes effect of functional transfer.
4/
May not exceed total limitation on use of income.

EMPLOYMENT DATA (All Central Office)

Fiscal Year	Permanent Positions	Average Employment	Average Grade	Average Salary
1973	18	15	11.1	$16,638
1974	18	16	11.11	$17,767
1975	18	16	11.11	$19,068
1976	18	16	11.11	$20,743
1977	18	16	10.89	$21,686
1978	18	17	11.11	$23,674
1979	18	17	10.95	$24,795
1980	19	18	10.88	$26,443
1981	19	18	11.26	$27,762
1982	19	18	11.26	$30,053
1983	19	19	(Average Grade/Salary no longer shown)	
1984	19	18		
1985	19	20		
1986	19	20		
1987	19	20		
1988	19	18		
1989				
1990				
1991				
1992				
1993				
1994				
1995				
1996				
1997				